



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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WSDA announces availability of \$3 million in specialty crop grants *Pre-Proposals due Jan. 23, 2012*

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) announced today that federal grants will be available to enhance the state's fruit, vegetable and nursery industry. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will be providing about \$3 million to Washington through its Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP), authorized by the federal 2008 Farm Bill.

Private and non-profit organizations, commodity commissions and other public entities may request funds for projects of \$25,000 to \$250,000 that benefit the competitiveness of fruit, vegetable, nursery and turfgrass producers. All projects must be completed within three years.

The first step in applying for grant funding is to submit a brief pre-proposal to WSDA. The submittal should be e-mailed to WSDA staff at specialtycrop@agr.wa.gov. The pre-proposals will be reviewed by WSDA, and successful applicants will be asked to submit full proposals for further review.

Application information and forms are available on WSDA's website at agr.wa.gov/grants/scbgp. For more information on the program, lists of eligible products and the federal requirements, go to the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service website at www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp or contact WSDA's Rianne Perry at (360) 902-2177 or rperry@agr.wa.gov.

Based on feedback from Washington's specialty crop industries, WSDA is seeking projects that improve food safety, develop organic and sustainable production practices, promote domestic and international markets, control pests and diseases and protect key resources, such as water, labor and land. Projects that benefit Washington's specialty crop producers in other ways are also encouraged. Each project must demonstrate benefits for the specialty crop industry and must not assist just a single producer or company. Projects that benefit Washington in addition to other states are encouraged, as are projects that benefit new farmers or socially disadvantaged farmers. Matching funds are not required but are strongly encouraged.

Washington is the third leading producer of specialty crops in the nation, which includes being the number one grower of apples, cherries, raspberries, hops, spearmint oil and many other commodities. This past October, WSDA announced the distribution of \$3.1 million to fund 20 projects benefitting the state's diverse specialty crop industry. The list may be viewed at agr.wa.gov/Grants/docs/2011AwardAbstracts.pdf

The timeline for WSDA's 2012 grant competition includes:

- Pre-Proposals are due to WSDA by 4 p.m. Jan. 23, 2012.

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- WSDA will review pre-proposals and invite full proposals in mid-March.
- Complete grant proposals are due to WSDA in mid-April.
- WSDA will select and submit the winning proposals to USDA by July 11.
- USDA will announce their awards in late September and WSDA grant agreements will be issued by November 2012.
- WSDA will offer unsuccessful applicants the opportunity to request feedback on their proposals.

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